DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 922 JC 920 352

AUTHOR McDonald, Cathryn A.; Calhoun, Harriott D.
TITLE Increasing Effectiveness by Integrating Planning and Evaluation.
PUB DATE Jun 92
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Summer Institute on Community College Effectiveness and Student Success (Vail, CO, June 21-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Accreditation (Institutions); *College Planning; *College Role; Community Colleges; Integrated Activities; Mission Statements; Models; Personnel Evaluation; Program Improvement; *School Effectiveness; *Self Evaluation (Groups); Student Evaluation; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Jefferson State Community College AL

ABSTRACT

In response to the criteria of its regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Jefferson State Community College (JSCC) developed an institutional effectiveness plan which, while demonstrating accountability, had as its primary goal the improvement of college programs and services. The plan consisted of three components (i.e., purposes/commitments; plans/planning; and results/evaluation) which were continuously refined and modified through the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation. In an effort to address institutional goals, JSCC decided to focus on "operational units," defined as any unit composed of one or more people who performed a clearly distinct function. JSCC's planning process was tied to the unit purposes and guided by three basic principles: plans must be flexible; plans must focus on results; and plans must ensure that the results achieved are those intended. The process followed an annual cycle which included review of the planning context, discussion of evaluation results from the previous year, identification of issues and concerns, selection of institutional action priorities and development of unit planning priorities, and budget preparation. The results/evaluation phase of the plan examined the college from four perspectives, that of the institution, of the operational units, of the personnel in these units, and of the students. Each of the three overall components served as an integral part of JSCC's efforts to achieve effectiveness. (JMC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED346922

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS BY INTEGRATING PLANNING AND EVALUATION

An Exemplary Practice Session
at the
1992 Summer Institute on Community College
Effectiveness and Student Success
Vail, Colorado
June 21-24, 1992

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. McDonald

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Cathryn A. McDonald, Associate Dean of Instruction
Harriott D. Calhoun, Director of Institutional Research
Jefferson State Community College
2601 Carson Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35215
(205) 853-1200

JC920 352

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS BY INTEGRATING PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Cathryn McDonald and Harriott Calhoun

Jefferson State Community College

Jefferson State's assessment and outcomes activities have, of necessity, been informed by the criteria for institutional effectiveness established by its regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Although accepting its responsibility as a public institution to respond to legitimate requests for accountability, the college does not believe that the demonstration of accountability will of itself lead to effectiveness. Therefore, the college's response to the SACS criteria has been to develop an institutional effectiveness plan which, while demonstrating accountability, has as its primary goal the improvement of college programs and services. This plan is comprised of three components - purposes, plans, and results - which are continuously refined and modified through the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation (Figure 1).

JEFFERSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Institutional Effectiveness Model

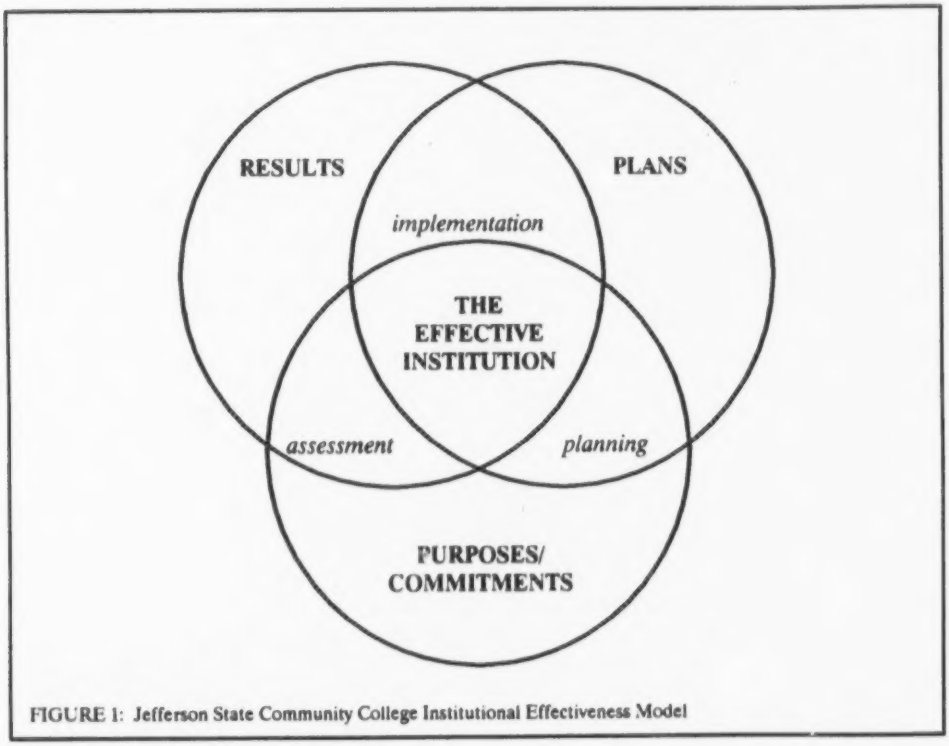

FIGURE 1: Jefferson State Community College Institutional Effectiveness Model

The institutional effectiveness plan and documentation of its implementation are communicated through a three volume series, *REFLECTION/REAFFIRMATION/REALIZATION. VOLUME I: REFLECTION* presents the college mission, planning assumptions, long-range goals, and other information that provide the context for planning at the institution; *VOLUME II: REAFFIRMATION* confirms the college's commitment to the institutional purposes presented in Volume I and describes the planning and evaluation processes through which the institutional effectiveness plan is implemented; and *VOLUME III: REALIZATION* is a compilation of the annual college operational plans (beginning with 1990-91) and the college's assessment of its efforts to achieve those plans and its long-range goals.

PURPOSES/COMMITMENTS

Since the stated purposes of an institution are central to any attempt to evaluate its effectiveness, it is critical that the institution be very clear and as explicit as possible about what it intends to do and be. Jefferson State's first step, then, in developing its institutional effectiveness plan was to examine its mission statement. In 1989, upon recommendation by the College Planning Council, an ad hoc committee was appointed to review the existing mission statement for clarity and completeness, ensuring that all components of the college's mission were included in the statement and that the purpose was stated in clear, explicit terms which would facilitate later assessment. After an intensive examination by the committee and collegewide review of a resulting draft, the current mission statement, the Statement of Philosophy and Purpose was adopted by the institution in 1991.

The mission statement identifies three broad purposes and lists a series of nine commitments that further define these purposes by describing the activities through which the institution attempts to ensure the achievement of its purposes. However, even a more explicit statement of purpose is difficult, if not impossible, to implement at the institutional level because colleges do not function at that level. Activities are carried out at operational levels - in an office or department, by a committee, or by individual employees. If institutional purposes are to be achieved, the college units functioning at the operational levels must clearly understand the purposes and accept responsibility for contributing to their achievement. Consequently, it is at these operational levels that the broad purpose/commitment statements found in Jefferson State's Statement of Philosophy and Purposes are translated into plans and actions.

In its efforts to operationalize the institutional purposes Jefferson State decided to focus on "operational units" rather than organizational units or accounting costs centers. An operational unit is defined as any unit composed of one or more people who perform a clearly distinct function or group of closely related functions. An analysis of the functions performed at the college identified thirty-eight operational units. Each operational unit has written purpose and commitments statements. The unit purpose statement relates the unit to the college purposes and reflects assigned responsibilities for specific sections of the College's purposes; it establishes the unit's role in the institution and summarizes its functions in very broad, general terms. The unit commitments are written as process statements which describe how each unit expects to achieve its purpose and those of the College for which it has accepted responsibility. Stated another way, the commitments are a list of the primary things that the unit does or provides in order to fulfill its purposes. With these statements each unit has indicated its understanding of its role in relation to the institutional purposes and acknowledged its responsibility for contributing to the achievement of one or more of those purposes.

PLANS/PLANNING

Jefferson State's planning process is closely tied to the achievement of the stated institutional and operational unit purposes and is guided by three basic principles: (1) plans must be flexible, (2) plans must focus on results, and (3) plans must ensure that the results achieved are those intended. The process follows an annual cycle that includes (1) review of the planning context, (2) discussion of evaluation results from the previous year, (3) identification of issues and concerns, (4) selection of institutional action priorities and development of unit planning priorities, and (5) budget preparation (see Figure 2).

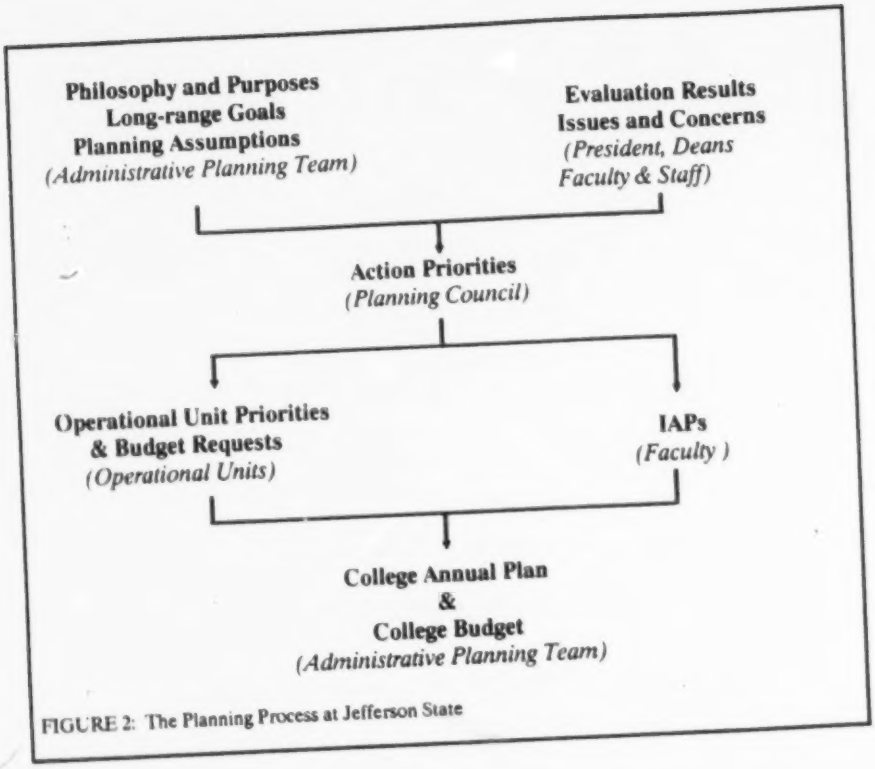

FIGURE 2: The Planning Process at Jefferson State

Personnel involved in the planning process include the Administrative Planning Team, the College Planning Council, and personnel in the each of the college's thirty-eight operational units. The Administrative Planning Team, which is composed of the President and the Deans, provides the central leadership for the process. The College Planning Council, which reports to the President, is a representative body consisting of faculty, professional staff, administrators, and a student.

The College Planning Council initiates the planning process with a review of the context within which planning will occur. Included in this review are the college purposes, long-range goals, and planning assumptions. Since the college mission statement, the Statement of Philosophy and Purpose, is the ultimate guide, providing both general direction and parameters for planning, the College Planning Council reviews the Statement and either reaffirms it or recommends that the President appoint an ad hoc committee to consider revisions. The recommendation to consider revision is automatic every fifth year if no changes have been made within that time.

Planning assumptions, as identified by the Administrative Planning Team, define the "world" within which the institution must plan. They present as realistically as possible the general limitations and opportunities that the institution will face in the future, given the framework of its philosophy and purposes and the environment in which it operates. The long-range goals indicate the general directions in which the college is going in order to achieve its purposes. These goals, which were formulated by the Administrative Planning Team, were reviewed collegewide before adoption. Both the planning assumptions and long-range goals are updated as needed and presented to the Planning Council.

Evaluation results are integrated into the planning process through a review of results from the previous year. An annual Evaluation of Effectiveness Report, prepared by the Administrative Planning Team and based on operational unit evaluation reports and reviews, summarizes the results of the College's efforts to achieve its goals during the past year and identifies issues and concerns that should be addressed in planning for the coming year. This report forms the basis for the Deans' report to the Planning Council. The President also makes a presentation in which she brings forth her issues and concerns as well as those identified by the Alabama State Board of

Education and the Department of Postsecondary Education, as appropriate. Additionally, all personnel of the college are invited to develop position papers concerning issues that they want the Planning Council to consider in recommending institutional action priorities to the President.

After consideration of the context within which the College must operate, the results of evaluation from the previous year, and the issues and concerns brought before it, the Planning Council recommends institutional action priorities to the President. After the President has approved the action priorities, planning moves to the operational unit and individual levels with the long-range goals providing the context and the institutional action priorities providing the emphasis for the development of plans. The operational units submit action plans consisting of unit priorities stated in the form of expected outcomes, the specific activities which will be carried out in implementing the unit priorities, and a detailed budget request to their Deans. The Deans, after negotiating with the units, submit their plans and proposed budgets to the Administrative Planning Council which merges plans from all areas into the College Annual Plan and a proposed college budget which is submitted to the Department of Postsecondary Education. Upon receipt of the final allocation of funds from the state, the institutional budget is balanced with available revenues, approved by the President, and submitted to the State Board of Education for adoption. After the budget has been approved at the state level, the College Plan and operational unit budgets are revised as appropriate and distributed.

RESULTS/EVALUATION

Colleges may be viewed from several perspectives, each of which provides valuable insights about their effectiveness, and an evaluation is not complete if any of the perspectives are ignored. A comprehensive and systematic assessment plan is needed to ensure that this does not happen. Jefferson State's plan examines the college from four perspectives, that of the institution, of the operational units responsible for the functioning of the institution, of the personnel in these units, and of the students. In each case the ultimate goal of evaluation is to provide valid and relevant information which is useful to the institution and to the people evaluated.

The first step in developing an evaluation plan was to identify the benchmarks against which effectiveness could be measured. For the institution and its operational units, these benchmarks are stated as expected results; for students, they are expressed as expectations in the form of course/program competencies and degree outcomes to be attained by the students; and for college personnel, they are evaluation criteria derived from the skills and knowledge required for the effective job performance.

Institutional and Operational Unit Evaluations. For the evaluation of effectiveness at the institutional and operational unit levels expected results and performance measures were identified for each institutional long-range goal and unit commitment. Then, standards of effectiveness were established for each identified expected result and performance measure. Expected results are stated as assessable outcomes, i.e., objectively observable and/or measurable. The level of performance for each expected result is the effectiveness standard. This standard establishes a high level of performance for the expected result as compared with what is typical or usual. While it defines exemplary performance, it is also balanced by considerations of costs, time, and circumstances. Performance measures are the methods of evaluation or the sources of evidence which will be used in making judgements about the results achieved.

These expected results, effectiveness standards and performance measures are used as the basis for a systematic and regular evaluation process. At both the institutional level and the operational unit level the intent of evaluation is to compare the results achieved with those expected or intended and provide information which can be used to improve programs and services by reducing the disparity between the two. The evaluation process involves two reporting procedures, one for the results of implementing the unit priorities for the year being evaluated and the other for the evaluation of routine, on-going activities (see Figure 3).

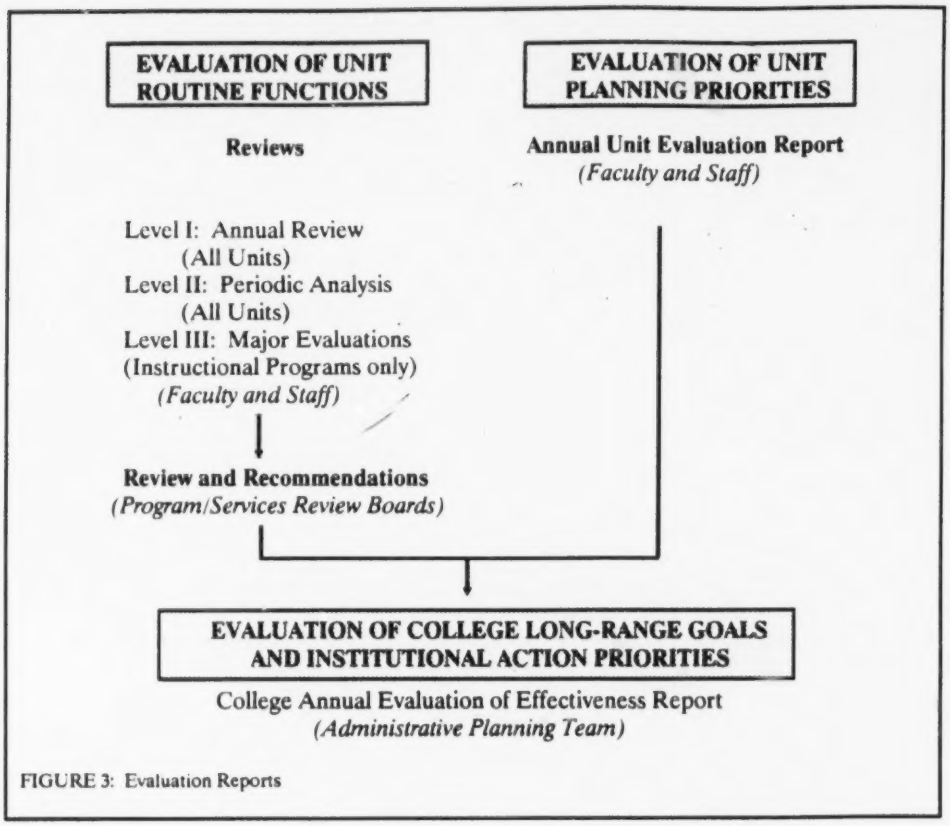

FIGURE 3: Evaluation Reports

Each fall the operational units submit, as part of their Operational Unit Annual Evaluation Report, a summary of the activities carried out in support of their unit planning priorities and the results achieved. The Deans and the President compare the results reported to the outcomes expected in assessing the effectiveness of the units' efforts.

Assessment at the institutional level involves the compilation and analysis of data from the appropriate units and comparison of the results with the expected results and performance measures established for the college long-range goals. This assessment and the results of efforts to achieve the institutional action priorities are published in the College Annual Evaluation of Effectiveness Report.

Evaluation of regular, on-going activities and functions in the operational units involves two or three levels of review by each unit and the designated review board. Each unit is required to conduct a review (Level I) annually and more indepth analysis (Level II and/or III) less frequently. The annual reviews are used to establish trends and identify problems severe enough to require further evaluation, whereas the primary purpose for the more indepth analyses is to develop recommendations for unit improvement. These self-evaluations and the resulting reports focus on the expected results for the unit and assessment of its performance as compared to the established effectiveness standards. The written reports provide the data needed for the designated review board to make judgements about effectiveness indicators such as demand or need, cost effectiveness, productivity, and quality of the unit and to make recommendations for improvement to the appropriate dean and/or president.

A detailed explanation of student and personnel evaluations is beyond the scope of this paper with its focus on the integration of institutional planning and evaluation, so only broad summaries of the components of these evaluations are provided below.

Student Evaluation. Student evaluation begins with assessment of their basic skills in writing, reading and mathematics. After their initial placement, evaluation of their progress towards achievement of course and program competencies is primarily through traditional in-class measurements. Some students in specialized fields are also evaluated through state and national licensure/certification examinations. Degree outcomes are measured through (1) student self-reporting of growth in the eight general education competencies, (2) student follow-up data on in-field employment and/or subsequent educational achievement, (3) reports from four-year colleges and universities on performance of transfer students, and (4) results of the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination.

Personnel Evaluation. Personnel at Jefferson State fall into three evaluation categories loosely based on salary schedules (administration, faculty, and staff). All personnel are evaluated annually using evaluation criteria derived from the skills and knowledge required for effective job performance. Faculty are evaluated both by students and their division chair. All supervisors in the instructional area are evaluated both by their immediate supervisor and by the people that they supervise. Staff and other supervisors are evaluated only by their immediate supervisors. All employees are given an opportunity to state agreement or disagreement with their supervisor's evaluation and to provide comments relative to the evaluation.

INTEGRATION

Each of the components discussed - purposes/commitments, plans/planning, results/evaluation - is an integral part of efforts to achieve effectiveness. Although each has been developed and implemented separately, and the emphasis on each may vary during the planning/evaluation cycle, it is only when they are all fully integrated that the college begins to emerge as truly effective.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
AUG 07 1992